/120 cont'd/

181 leader was arrested and tortured by the Li because he planned to es-
871 tablish a school. But they were not discouraged by these unhappy
648 occurrences and pushed on to their goal. On this occasion, when we arrived in the village this spring, they were just trying to establish a school and begged us to stay there for a few months to do some teaching for them. At the least, they hoped we would help them to establish the school. But owing to our busy schedule, we had to leave within a few days. It was really surprising that when we returned there within a week we found that they had already completed the construction of the school building. Teachers had also been engaged, waiting for the opening of classes. However, the Li leaders in the neighborhood were preventing them from doing this by every means. When we left there this conflict had not been yet settled. This event impressed us deeply.

648 The Miao all live high in the mountains. Their life is hard,
123 and they have no place to submit their complaints. Therefore, they are very glad to have some cultural and social intercourse with the Chinese, and, needless to say, they have great expectations of the government. When we arrived in the Miao area, they gave us a warm welcome, /121/ because, with the exception of a few Chinese merchants, very few Chinese ever visited there and were sympathetic toward them. However, a few shrewd Li leaders also are aware of this and try by every means to prevent the Chinese from meeting the Miao. The Li leaders especially try to prevent the Miao from getting in touch with the Chinese government, so that their complaints will not be heard by the outside world and they will have to endure all the injustices inflicted on them.

511 The differences in the way of life between these two groups of people have created two entirely different national characteristics. The Miao are a people without property. The mountain area in which they live is rented from others. They have to pay a certain amount of rent annually. These mountain lands usually have very poor soil. Water supply is insufficient. They have to work hard to combat
157 nature in order to obtain a minimum amount of produce to live on.
461 Such circumstances have made them a hard-working and very frugal

M /121 cont'd/
157 people. They must work hard so they can overcome nature and in-
461 crease their production. They must be frugal so they can make the most effective distribution of their hard-earned produce in order not to be anxious about starvation. All visitors who have been in Miao villages are surprised by how hard they work. The women usually get up before dawn to do their various domestic chores. Early morning is also the time for them to hull rice. The thumping of pestle and mortar occasionally wakes up the sleeping guests. After sunrise they separate and go up the mountain to cut wood or do some kind of farm work. The men work on the same schedule from sunrise to sunset. The busiest season for them is the period from the second to the fifth month. Within this period they have to cut wood, burn the mountains, and sow. Every type of work requires much physical strength. They usually make the best use of every inch of the land.
M
273 Their frugal life is equally praiseworthy. Though most of the men drink and smoke, they do so only to a certain extent. There are almost no drunkards in Miao society. Except on a few festive occasions, they seldom drink. Some of the women do drink, but none of them smoke. /122/ This is in sharp contrast with Li life. Furthermore, under the double oppression of both Li leaders and Chinese merchants, the Miao are an underprivileged people. For the sake of living they have to learn how to obey and be submissive and patient, but at all times they never give up fighting for a better life. Therefore, in personality they are firm of purpose.

H The Li are not like this. In the Li area, though level fields
13 are very rare, yet the endless mountain slopes are invaluable property
313 given by nature, full of lumber, rattan, wild animals, etc., free for exploitation. The slopes of the small mountains are the best land for raising grain. It is only necessary to start operations and then gather in the crops. Singe their supply of foodstuff is comH paratively sure, their spending is also freer. It is of no use for them
181 to pile up their savings. "Be drunk while you have wine today";
273 let tomorrow take care of tomarrow. Furthermore, they can move
276 from place to place rather freely. From mountain to mountain, they need not worry about seeking a place to live. Hence drinking

/122 cont'd/

H 181 273 276 [48] and smoking are very popular habits among the Li. Parents do not even forbid their children to indulge in them. Taking advantage of this Li habit, the Chinese merchants make money by encouraging them to go on sprees. Consequently, many Li become bankrupt. (For further reference, see Chapter V of Report on an Investigation of the Li of Hainan Island.) Since they need not worry about making a living, the Li are lazy as compared with the Miao. The Miao want more land to cultivate but do not have mountain slopes that they can plant. The Li, on the contrary, do not want to work while they have lots of land. This is a sharp contrast between the two peoples. In personality the Li are masterful, savage and cruel, and hot-tempered. On the one hand, this might be due to the influence of smoking and drinking; on the other hand, there is also the historical factor. In the past 2,000 years, Li uprisings were very frequent. The governments of successive dynasties constantly tried to reduce them to submission by force. However, they have never really been subdued. No dynasty has ever really had them under complete control. Hence they still retain the fighting nature of a primitive people. However, some aspects of their nature are also praiseworthy. They are very frank and straightforward. These characteristics show up especially clearly when they are compared with the Miao.

H M 171 157 181

(3)

H M 648 439 The preceding has been a discussion of the conflicts in the relationships of the three peoples. Now let us discuss the harmonious aspects.

Relations between ethnic groups are based upon mutual demands. Therefore days of peace are more frequent than days of dissension, and harmonious relations are more evident than those of conflict. The harmonious relations between the Chinese, Li, and Miao are very evident and easily seen and are based upon their economic transactions. In these harmonious relations, an important role is played by the Chinese merchants. They have created an unbreakable

86: Robequain--248 K-5 (no date) 1929 AM1 Indochina
Vietnamese
Miao AE5 Mi
Hospitable people, the Meo of Thanh Hoa have remained timid 570
and extremely superstitious. They can neither read nor write, they 212
stammer out the Thai language for their commercial transactions, and
only their leader knows Annamese at all well. They all fled frightened
into the rẫy when I wanted to photograph them before the door of their
house. They used to live on the calcareous Mộc plateau which stretches Mi
out of the frontier chain of North Thanh Hoá beyond the Mai Châu gorge 167
in the province of So'n La. Their leader told me that he was born at
Chiềng Ly (?), three days' march from the market of Su Yut (2). They

2. On the Black River.

did not enter the province all at once, but by groups between 1900 and 1905. Some of the first-comers have already emigrated southwest into Hua Phan and the mountains surrounding M. Poun, Xiềng Mène and Sam Teu, and they will all probably end up by moving in this direction. Coming down Phủ Nghi through M. Pung, I encountered several abandoned Mèo houses, entanglements of bamboo now invaded by brush, where a pipe still brought in a trickle of /236/ clear water, and where the decortication mill, too heavy for a distant exodus, still lay on the ground. Neither do the Mèo hesitate to leave their ancestors' tombs on these sheer slopes, little barricaded buttes on which they have placed tiny, derisory effigies -- bottles of brandy, bamboo pails and wooden spoons. The Mèo leader, who had only been settled three years in the house where he received me, already found that his rẫy were too far off and talked of leaving soon.

Indeed, there is nothing to induce the Mèo to settle permanently in these western cantons of Thanh Hoá. Any kind of irrigated crop is impossible on the narrow hills which taper off into sheer slopes, and even the lower edges of their rẫy strike those of the Thai coming up from the valleys. No doubt they appear as implacable destroyers of the forest, but it is the only way they can live (1).

1. Moreover, they are not responsible for the vast extents of thatch grass which, striped with black at the end of the dry season by the paths of fires, cover the sides of Phủ Nghi. These patches are the result of a comparatively early deforestation which the Thai themselves impute to their ancestors.

[150 cont.]

101 White Meo ("Peu-Méo")
Black Meo ("Heu-Méo")
Red Meo ("Hong-Méo")
Meo of the flowers ("Hoa-Méo")
"Méo-moung-cha"

[151] These various tribes have characters, mores, and dialects only very slightly different. They are melting little by little [184] into one another and scarcely differ except in the details of feminine costume. Hence, we shall not study them separately, as we have done for the tribes of the preceding groups, and we shall restrict ourselves to pointing out in passing the peculiarities of each of them.

The "Méo" men are generally of medium or small stature, 142 robust, hardy, with strong legs, developed by the long climbs in the [147] mountains and the carrying of heavy burdens. Some "Méo" are of large stature, but these are not the toughest. The women are smaller than the men. Very sweet and graceful during their youth, they soon become very clumsy and heavy. Their breasts are extremely well [163] developed but deformed by their numerous progeny. The birth rate [165] is very high; the infant mortality, likewise.

The "Méo" have very coarse, very black hair. It is not rare [143] to find among them individuals who are blond or even albino, however.

273 The "Méo," very sober in normal times, seizes every opportunity to become drunk and to make good cheer. He often contracts [164] pulmonary diseases due to his heedlessness and to the bad conditions under which he lives.

147 It is impossible to acclimate him to low altitudes, where he immediately falls sick and rapidly becomes dispirited.

The "Méo" who have established irrigated rice fields have 241 carried out this work along high mountain valleys. Yet they do not 361 live near these planted areas, in spite of the relatively high altitude of the latter. As soon as the daily work is finished, they climb up again to their villages, which always remain located near the summits (see photo 428, Plate 43).

157 The "Méo" is of a gay disposition, very independent, courage- 609 ous, and extremely candid. Very hospitable, he always welcomes

[151 cont.]

157 the stranger who comes to visit him and who is completely safe
609 under his roof.

The "Méo" women are gay, mirthful, only slightly shy, especially when their confidence has been gained. (One may see in photo 128, Plate 43, a European woman in the midst of a group of "Méotes," who are showing a sometimes indiscreet curiosity regarding all that has to do with the details of costume and of coiffure of strangers from the Occident.)

562 The condition of the "Méo" women is rather hard. They share in the most difficult labor.

836 The young women are not distinguished by an excess of virtue, but this fact is considered of little importance by the "Méo."

526 The young boys and the young men greatly honor exercises of skill and strength and often compete with one another in carrying heavy burdens or in racing over the mountains.

[152] The various dialects used by the "Méo" are monosyllabic.
193 As among the "Man-ta-pan" the qualifying word is placed before the noun, the subject before the verb, the direct object after the indirect.

197 It is likely that in their country of origin each "Méo" tribe used a special dialect. Among the tribes settled in Tonkin, who are very much mixed together, the dialects, which are not fixed by any writing, seem to blend together by regions and to be used in each of these regions by all the "Méo" tribes who dwell there.

[198] Almost all the "Méo" use the "kouan-hoa" as the language of
212 commerce. Literate persons are very rare. Those who know a few
[871] characters pronounce them in the Chinese fashion. The "Méo" are beginning to send their children to the schools that are being con-
[648] ducted in our frontier posts located at the high altitudes. For their dealings with the authorities and for writing their rare letters, they have recourse to the help of a literate Chinese.

539 The "Méo" have no written literature, but they know narra-
[533] tives, prayers, and some songs, which they sing in a monotonous, sad tone. They show little imagination, much simplicity and sometimes even triviality, for they particularly extol the material joys of life, of the table, and of love, the sole pleasures of a race whose

[168 cont.]

776 tormenting human beings, they have no fear at all of these bad spirits, contrary to what we have seen in the "Thai" and especially in the "Man." Also the "Thai" and the "Man" consider the "Méo" as men of a special species.

[169] The "Méo" think that men have three souls, "pli,"
774 775 that reincarnate themselves in the bodies of pregnant women. (See note on page 178.)

They have the priest-sorcerers who preside at the ceremonies
793 and have the power of communicating with the spirits. These priests are illiterate and receive no initiation. The tribal traditions, the curtailed rites, and the few formulas of exorcism or of incantation are orally transmitted. The office is usually hereditary.

The "Méo" celebrate a great many festivals, which are so
796 many occasions for having a spree. At the beginning of the year, the spirits of heaven, of the earth, and of the hearth are especially feted, as well as the ancestors. At planting time, sacrifices are made to the spirit of the mountains, protector of the crops. After the harvest, further sacrifices to the spirit of the mountains and to the ancestors. The third day of the fifth month, a special celebration at the time of the harvesting of medicinal herbs. Besides these cere-
[527] monies on fixed dates, the "Méo" carefully celebrate the anniversaries of births and of other happy events. All these festivals consist of feasting and drinking intermingled with songs and dances. The "Méo"
[157] nature is carefree and very gay; he loves music and dancing. The
[831] songs, in "Méo" dialect, are always obscene and even erotic. The
533 dance, performed only by the men, is most often done while playing
535 the "sen." The player keeps his knees bent and the upper part of his body leaning forward. He jumps from one foot to the other, either while turning about or going forward or backward, but without ceasing his playing. (Photo 155, Plate 40.)

The "Méo" children very often play the game of the revolving
524 seesaw, which they probably got from the Chinese. A solid post, deeply planted in the earth, terminates at its upper end in a central peg, on which is balanced a very big pole, which has for this purpose a hole through its center. This pole is movable horizontally about the axis formed by the central peg described above. It is also movable

131 /131/ As we have seen, the characteristic MIAD AE6
of the Meo is their
living at high altitudes and their difficulty in acclimating in the lower valleys. In fact they seek to compensate for a lower altitude by a higher altitude. They require a severe climate, which they enjoyed on the high plateau of Yunnan and Szechwan and which they were forced to evacuate. They live especially on limestone peaks, and when some families live at the bottoms of cirques, the altitude of these goes up at least to a thousand meters. They prefer steep slopes where their little house appears to be suspended like a cage on the side of a wall.

Section 2

Physical and Moral Natures

142 The Meo is short and thick-set, his average height must be
147 about 1.58 meters. He is right to be proud of the name Meo which
143 was given to him by the Annamese as a contemptuous title. As a matter of fact, he climbs like a cat. Along trails where we must use hands and knees, he may be seen going ahead slowly but with supple ease, even though he often is carrying a loaded pack-basket on his back. His resistance to fatigue is very great while he remains above 800 meters altitude, below this he thinks he is in danger of being taken ill in the hot season.

142 The Meo has a nearly white complexion, hard and prominent
157 features, brown eyes and hair like all the inhabitants of Indochina, aside from a few unusual specimens with reddish hair and blue eyes.
[461] He is as hard-working as the Thai is indolent. More courageous than most of the natives, he would be as dangerous to have as an enemy as he has been useful to us as an ally on certain occasions, such as
562 the conquest of Dongquan in 1893. The Meo woman is not pretty.
142 She is a crude country-woman and a hard worker whose sturdiness is incompatible with all grace and style. However, the young women attract one's eye by the freshness of their pink and white faces, the air of health and vigor which they give forth, and their well-developed figures, which are emphasized by their very picturesque costumes. /132/ The high pitch and the weakness of their voice makes it resemble a small girl's. In short, youth and freshness endow the crude woman of the mountain with the same allure as all women. Unfortunately, like her neighbors of the valleys, she is subjected to hard toil in the fields at an early age. Moreover, she marries young and the cares of maternity added to those of house-keeping cause her to lose her shape and to take away her fresh appearance very quickly.

/57 cont./

M 854 [482] Abadie (1), while discussing the carrying of burdens on the back,

1. Page 160.

also mentions the child-carriers of the Meau: "This method of carrying loads is also used for small children, whom the women hoist on their backs, packed in a kind of bag that is held on the shoulders by means of two supports." Abadie published illustrations of this on Plates 39 and 40 of his work. There are no cradles.

A M 855 Among the Akha small children are cared for by the parents, among the Meau chiefly by the grandparents. Older siblings also devote much time to them and are often entrusted with the care of somewhat bigger children. From six to eight years of age they are taken into the children's group (see the section, "The Children's Group," in this chapter).

A M [868] [867] In both tribes much time is devoted to the children. The mother attempts to teach her child a few words at an early age; she begins with the expression for father and mother. Thus, from a young age the child has continual social contact all day long. Accordingly the social components are more strongly developed than among European children of the same age. The situation is therefore nothing like what Lajonquière (2) writes

M 114 855

2. II, p. 315.

about the children of the Meau: /58/ "They grow up without supervision and moral education, a prey to their instincts, and are forced into hard work in the fields as soon as their age permits them to do work."

A M 857 [609] [867] [157] [123] The children learn very early to distinguish between family and tribal members and persons who are foreign to the tribe. They are not bashful, but are very curious, and because of these qualities become very annoying to strangers after a brief acquaintanceship. On the other hand, they do not like to be watched while they go about their own business. Thus it came about that everywhere and in no time we were the focal point of the children, who crowded around us in droves and

AKha A04
Miao AE5

/67 cont./

M 526 "pride themselves on exhibiting their physical superiority by frequently wrestling or by comparing skill and strength in the execution of a task or the swiftness and strength of their calves in climbing difficult paths...," observations that Abadie (2) repeats.

2. Page 151.

A [526] Footraces and wrestling according to special rules are unknown, however, among the Meau and Akha in Thailand.

A 526 Among the Akha competitive games are scarcely practiced. Only once did I watch a shooting match with crossbows among them; on the other hand, fighting without any rules is generally widespread.

M 524 /68/ Guessing games are little practiced among the Meau and are completely absent among the Akha.

A [524] tsă mĭ sū is one of the few Meau guessing games. In it a child takes, let us say, a lamp in his hand and asks another, who must not look: "What is this? It is a rider on horseback without feet or eyes and yet able to see?" The answer runs: "It is a light on your arm; it has no eyes or feet, but reaches into every corner."

tū is another guessing game. Grain, copper, and a coin are placed next to a child who does not look. He must now guess what the object is.

A M 524 I did not find any humorous riddle games /Scherzspiele/, teasing games /Neckspiele/, or war games. It is strange, too, that among both peoples string games, which otherwise are widespread throughout the world, are completely absent. Aside from the aforementioned shooting matches and footraces of the Meau, there are no other sporting games, even in rudimentary form, nor games that would point toward sadistic or masochistic tendencies.

A M 524 526 157

It is striking that many games of these mountain peoples of Farther India are absolutely identical with the games of the children of fully civilized European peoples /europäischen Vollkulturvölker/. This is all the more remarkable since there

A M 524 526 171

/69 cont./
A M 857 561 461 is first of all adjusted to their physical strength; in short, the playful imitation of adult activity is automatically replaced by actual work as soon as the necessary strength is there. Secondly, the work depends upon the seasons since, in general, the work of the Meau is conditioned by them.

Otherwise, there is no regulation of activity, either within the work group or with respect to the time that is to be spent at work and at play. Everything is arranged according to the work of the adults, into which all the children are always drawn. At the time when the fields are cultivated or when new villages are to be laid out, everyone must work uninterruptedly according to his strength from dawn to dusk, but during the period after the harvest there are long stretches of leisure, and the days are then filled with laughter and games. In any case, there is no more importance attached to a child's reaching the working age than to his completion of the sixth year, which is so significant for our children.

/70/ In general, it can be said that both sexes at about the age of sixteen are fully able to perform the work of the adults.

2. The Children's Group

A M 857 [156] As soon as the children of the Meau and Akha are three or four years old, they are admitted into the children's group (Ill. 14). Even earlier, however, they are taken along by their older siblings, on whose backs they participate in the games. There seems to be hardly any eccentrics among the children; at any rate, I never saw a child going about by himself.

M 857 157 The composition of the children's group varies greatly and depends on which children happen to have free time. Among the Meau, the leader of the group is always the child present at the moment who is physically the strongest, although there is no noticeable competition for the position of leader. All of them, however, know exactly who is the strongest, and accordingly they submit to him without demur. Sometimes there are scuffles within the group. Competition

/70 cont./

M 857 157 is noticeable in the children's groups of the Meau only in those games already described in which great emphasis is put on performance. Vying in speech, however, the so-called "showing off," does not seem to be customary.

A 857 157 Among the Akha things are done in a somewhat more brutal way, as the games described show. Accordingly, two children's groups more conspicuously separated by sex are formed here. The one includes all boys from three to thirteen years of age who happen to be "off duty," who are led with sheer force by the physically strongest boy. In this group there is intense rivalry for the role of leader, and there are often wild fights until the strongest has asserted himself.

A 573 157 [857 589] A second group is made up of small girls, and a third of all older girls, widows, and divorced women who want to marry again. The leader of this third group is usually a merry widow. In this group there is no particular rivalry for leadership, which is not attained through mere strength, but through /71/ special intelligence. Nothing like a test of intelligence plays any role in this, but rather the woman to whom the rest naturally defer in the course of time becomes the leader.

A 857 These children's groups of the Akha are numerically very strong. This follows merely from the aforementioned size of the Akha villages and the extraordinary fertility of their inhabitants. One scarcely finds a group of less than twenty members. The activity of these groups begins chiefly in the evening, after the day's work has been done, and reaches its peak after sunset. Even as late as 10 o'clock we frequently heard these children shrieking and shouting at their games. After sunset, A [535] some of the Akha girls set out for the dance places, to which a few precocious boys also come, sometimes accompanied by smaller comrades (see also the section on "Sexual Development" A in this chapter). Like the children of the Meau, but to a much M greater extent, the Akha children live in the present; they [157] talk a great deal and are very active.

AKha A04
Miao AE5

/71 cont./

3. The Refractory Age

A M 865 157

The refractory age of the children among both the Akha and the Meau is very pronounced in both sexes at the age of from three to five. The defiant child, screaming, will strike out at adults and try to beat them or throw himself down on the ground, howling and kicking. The adults of both peoples do not pay much attention to these tantrums. Sometimes they speak to the children, but kindly, and try to divert them by giving them something to eat or the like. Such an attitude presumes, however, that the child's behavior is not a reaction to orders he has been given. If such is the case, the children are punished and, I was told, also beaten and forced to carry out the order in spite of their resistance. The parents, however, never complain about such outbursts of defiance on the part of the children and accept them as something to be taken for granted. In answer to my question as to whether the behavior of the child did not seem serious to them, the Meau told me: "This happens only with small children."

/72/ 4. Puberty

A M 881 [884]

Neither among the Meau nor among the Akha does the beginning of puberty mean the slightest outward change in the normal life. Neither people has any ceremonial initiation in connection with it or an accompanying celebration of adulthood, since the latter, among them, does not coincide with the beginning of puberty (cf. the chapter, "Social Organization," section on "Organization of the Family"). Similarly, tattooing, masking, or circumcision in any form does not occur. Only the attainment of the age when one is capable of bearing arms plays a role (see the chapter, "Army and War").

A M [304]

A M [145]

Depending on the nutritional level of the family, boys reach puberty at the age of fourteen to sixteen, girls somewhat earlier; in general this time point for both is considerably later than, for instance, for European Mediterranoid children. The behavior of the young people of the two tribes differs, however, as soon as they reach puberty.

/72 cont./

881 The menstruating Meau girl is ashamed and tries to find out from her mother whether she is ill; she is also reticent about talking with other adults. The mother explains the facts of life to the girl, unless this has already been done by older playmates, as is usually the case. Boys naturally turn to their fathers with questions about sex.

[157] Girls as well as boys at the time of puberty become introspective, often seem absent-minded, and gradually withdraw more and more from the children's group, for which they have less and less time since they are put to work to an increasing extent. At the beginning of this period the adolescents avoid [572] the other sex; friendships between those of the same sex arise instead. The adolescents often develop an extravagant attachment to older persons of the same sex.

[774] This behavior, especially the apparent absent-mindedness, disturbs the parents. Soon it is said that the soul has left the body [756] and that evil spirits prevent it from returning. One sends for the [755] shaman, who begins his conjurations. /Ill. 18-21 appear here on unnumbered pages/ /73/ which make an extremely strong impression upon the adolescents.

887 Very soon, however, their attitude changes and strikes 836 out in the opposite direction. The pubescent Meau then seeks contacts with the other sex; they tend to stay away from members of their own sex, but especially from the younger children, and attach themselves to adults. It is not long before the girl, prompted by the older boys, begins an open flirtation, which usually leads to sexual surrender. The pubescent boys also seek sexual intercourse and approach the older, still unmarried girls, but never married women (see the section, "Courtship and Betrothal," in this chapter). They follow the older boys on their pursuit of girls and try to watch them and it is not long before they, too, are experienced in all phases of love-making (see the section, "Sexual Development," in this chapter).

883 The pubescent Meau begin to pay attention to cleanli- [515] ness and wash themselves several times a month. They think a great deal about their future. They picture their home.

[Text Continues on P. 112]

39: Bernatzik--122 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 A01 Thailand
Akha A04
Miao AE5

7. Mental Development

A M 114 125 145 Unfortunately I was unable to test adequately either the children of the Akha or those of the Meau. A number of difficulties blocked this, especially the shortage of porters, which did not permit moving our test material. Moreover my test forms were designed for the mental world of primitives and could not be applied without further ado to a mountain people of Farther India with the mental capacity of the Akha, much less that of the Meau. It would have been necessary to revise my test forms, but we did not have the time to do this, especially since our funds were limited.

A M 157 856 According to our observations, however, the children of the Meau are more highly developed and surpass those of all the mountain tribes of Further India, including the Akha. Particularly striking among the Meau is a marked individualism, or rather a strong differentiation in comparison with the other tribes mentioned, which is already apparent even in small children. At the age of four or five distinct differences of character and talent are already evident. The Meau children begin to talk when they are one year old, those of the Akha somewhat later; at this age they are already able to say "father" and "mother" and a few other words. There are, however, some gifted children who speak even earlier and some without talent who are hardly this far at the age of two. One can say, however that at an average age of three and a half years the language of the children is almost equal to that of the adults.

A M 153 856

At the age of two the children are not yet able to eat by themselves; they learn this during their third year. The Meau children begin asking questions at the age of five, those of the Akha at the age of six. The children of the Meau do not bother to think up explanations of their own for things that are unknown to them, but rather in each and every case ask their parents or other adults of their community, and in this respect they are decidedly vivacious and active. The children of the Akha are less persistent in this questioning than those of

A M 153 861 157

/82 cont./

A M 153 861 [157] the Meau. If they do not receive an adequate or satisfactory answer, they soon go on to something else. They themselves never try to explain unfamiliar things; on the otherhand, /83/ with strangers they are more active and less self-conscious in their questioning than the Meau children, who, to be sure, are curious, but remain shyly in the background.

Most of the children ask many questions, but there are also some who ask few. They want an explanation for everything that is inexplicable to them. They ask why the trees grow, who makes the rice, what kind of spirits there are, why the dog barks, why the father goes hunting, why one hurts himself when he falls down, why birds fly, and so forth. The adults attempt to answer these questions truthfully and to the best of their ability, but sometimes they themselves are at a loss. If they are unable to answer a question, they say: "Oh, you already know more than I do, why do you ask me?"

A M 153 856 145 As far as learning ability is concerned, the Meau children, according to my observations, are extremely gifted; in my estimation, at least up to the age of six they are hardly less gifted than European children of the same age. The Akha children are somewhat less gifted. In all practical aspects and in the use of their bodies, the children of the Meau and Akha are more skillful and especially more perservering and much tougher than children of the Schan /Shan/ and Lao at the same age.

A M [871] Comparisons with European children in school could not be made, since in northern Thailand neither the Meau nor Akha children visit any schools. Besides, there were no European children there as a basis for comparison.

8. Art in the Life of Children

A M 857 [534] The musical instruments of the adults (see the chapter, "Art," section on "Music and Musical Instruments") are precious and are not given to the children. I could not find any instruments for children, not even any that could be regarded as relics on the path of the development of the art. At most it

/261 cont./

166 bellowing, and cheering can be heard for miles. Consequently
484 it seldom happens that the advanced guard encounters game, for the larger animals of the forest have usually taken cover in plenty of time. During the migration, a playful or childlike
[157] impulse for destruction against the forest is also expressed, which
[824] leads the people to damage plants and trees out of sheer wantonness. For example, I never saw a Meau pass a rubber liana /262/ without cutting the plant with the chopping knife merely for the pleasure of seeing the juice ooze out.

361 For the choice of the settlement site, the altitude is of
133 fundamental significance. One can even say that the settlements of the Meau are actually limited to certain altitudes. I myself did not find any Meau village below 1,200 meters in altitude, and other authors (1), too, are struck by the settlement pattern,

1. Credner, II, p. 138.

limited to certain altitudes, of the various mountain and forest peoples in Thailand.

361 Within these altitude limits, the Meau carefully seek out a suitable slope. They never build a village on a level surface, a saddle, or on the peak of a mountain. They most prefer to choose a place which lies just below the crest line of a mountain range.

In territories in which the Meau must reckon with hostile influences, they lay out their dwelling sites so as to make access as difficult as possible. Thus, Marabail (2) writes of the Meau

2. Page 133.

of Tonkin: "They choose the steep inclines of the mountains
[417] for their dwellings... They reach these heights by means of bamboo ladders tied together, which are sometimes three hundred meters long."

39: Bernatzik--619 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand
AKha AO4
Miao AE5

/458 cont./

A M 161 Thus, in recapitulation, it can be said that the number of the Akha and Meau living today, as well as the actual demographic movement, lie completely in obscurity. The Akha, too, may represent a considerable contingent of population, but it can hardly be assumed that it is a matter of anywhere near as mighty a bulk of population as the Meau. From my own observations I can say that in the case of both tribes it is a matter of thoroughly healthy people. As a consequence A M [163] [165] of the average number of children, from eight to twelve among the Akha and seven among the Meau, a strong increase of the population is to be presumed, in spite of high infant mortality, wherever there are no limiting factors, such as sickness (see the chapter, "Medicine"), crop failure, warlike events, or special laws of the political rulers of the country, which, of course, decisively influence the natural increase. /Ills. 86-91 appear here on unnumbered pages./

/459/ Chapter 31

Talent, Knowledge, Character, Morality, and Manners

M 181 461 The Meau are a typical mountain people. They are by nature healthy, honest, sincere, not at all treacherous, and, above all, industrious. This is necessary in order to master the hard daily work that is to be done year in and year out. One M [124] seldom sees adults sit around idly. Among the Meau, whenever I summoned my informants for linguistic studies, they provided themselves beforehand with the necessary material for at least making string or rope during our conversations. They then worked mechanically while I conversed with them. These M 181 ● 157 conversations and my observations of their daily life gave me a good opportunity to discover that the burden of everyday life had not made them morose. On the contrary, they are cheerful, merry, and, at the same time, very conscientious.

AKha A04
Miao AE5

A
M /460 cont./
147 somewhat soft /461/ and plaintive, especially in comparison
with the Akha women, who are superior to them in hardiness, as
M these people generally are in relation to the Meau. I found
147 among the Meau of both sexes particularly good and reliable
482 porters, though, in general, they perform porter-service for
[609] strangers very unwillingly. After they had once declared themselves ready to come to terms, however, the men as well as the women, without another word, took on loads up to 50 kilograms, walked along with these on their backs so rapidly that we could hardly keep up with them, and steadfastly kept their promise.

M The opposite of this pronounced mountain-folk character
147 of the Meau is formed by their valley-dwelling neighbors, the
181 Lao and the Schan /Shan/, who represent typical tropical peo-
171 ple of the valley lowlands. They are accustomed to having Nature pour everything from her horn of plenty into their laps without any effort, they love idleness, and they are lazy and indolent, for a single annual harvest abundantly feeds the family. They, too, are cheerful, but unreliable and flighty. The Lao were indeed easy to persuade to serve as porters, but they would complain even if the loads weighed only 18 kilograms and usually ran away after one day!

M The Meau treat women and children, as well as the
576 subordinates and unfree (see the chapter, "Social Organization," the section, "Age Classes, Secret Societies, Rank Organization") well throughout and are courteous to superiors without being
M humble. Abadie (1) also points out: "The Meau women are
●157

1. Page 151.

cheerful, gay, and not very shy, especially when they have acquired confidence."

M Among one another the Meau are very friendly and
571 have a pronounced property sense. Whereas with regard to foreign
[648] people any violation of their property rights immediately arouses
[152] their warlike instincts, among the unmarried lads even the female sex cannot provoke any deep enmities; for these reasons duels
M are unknown. Such behavior is quite plausible in view of their
577